



The Search for an Effective Curricular Change Adoption in Foreign Language Education: A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract

There is a rich body of studies on the implementation problems of curricular changes comprising more student-centred methodologies in English as a foreign language education around the world. Focusing on these global-wide studies within the context of the Ecological System Theory, this meta-synthesis aims to identify the common factors that hinder the curricular change implementation and to reveal the final synthesis that will lead to effective curricular change adoption. Hence, 10 studies from seven country settings (Türkiye, Japan, Colombia, South Korea, China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh) were included in the sample of the study. The analyses uncovered similar factors such as teachers' qualifications at the micro-level, lack of support and infrastructure at the meso-level, and lack of guidance or misalignment between curricular change and high-stakes testing policy at the macro-level for blocking the implementation. The synthesis indicated weaknesses between the systems from macro to micro, which resulted in the lack of interactions, as well as the coordination needed for the curricular change adoption. When they are improved, the connection between the systems will be built and all the needed contexts will be structured for the adoption. Consequently, the implications for the interaction improvement are provided.

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Introduction

Hoping to achieve a high level of English accuracy and fluency, several countries around the world propose curricular reforms, but they end up with strong implementation problems. The foreign language education knowledge-base includes many studies discussing the practical problems of curricular reforms comprising a communication-oriented approach with more student-centred methodologies in English as a foreign language (EFL) and they share the same argument that teachers have difficulty in implementation (see e.g., Adamson & Yin, 2008; Zare & Sarab, 2020). The approach adopted by curricular reforms is also called communicative language teaching (CLT) and it emphasizes students' needs, feelings, and motivation while language learning is facilitated through meaningful communication, interaction, and discovery (Richards, 2006). In this sense, it can be considered a radical reconstruction or modification of curricula. However, the implementation and adoption of these change attempts might not occur as they are intended, as in the case in many EFL studies mentioned above. Therefore, innovation studies revealing what happens when curricular changes meet reality are needed to develop curriculum management strategies (Hewitt, 2006). On the other hand, centring around students, the implementation, as well as the adoption of these reforms might also be shaped by the systems affecting students' development.

Since curricular change is nested in multiple systems within the broader environment that influences teaching, learning, and student outcomes (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019), any curricular change implementation focusing on student outcomes should not ignore the systems or contexts enabling students' development. Thus, it is needed to argue curricular change within the context of the systems established around students, which is described through the ecological system theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The ecological system theory (EST) explains students' development through complex layers of the environment and the interaction between those layers around them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

By stressing the quality and context of students' surroundings (Härkönen, 2007), the EST explains students' development through the systems establishing inter-related structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to the theory, the classroom as an immediate setting around students (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is the microsystem including interactions related to teaching and learning of curricular change (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). Extending the microsystem and providing the connection with it, school is the mesosystem in the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, classroom and school constituting the small picture in a curricular change process must be appreciated for how they influence curricular change.

Expanding the picture outside of school, region or state will be detected as the system affecting students' development. Named the exosystem, it involves policies that take place at the local and regional level within curricular change (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019) and it links school as students' immediate contexts to other social settings in which they do not have an active role (Christensen, 2016). Offering multiple systems and relationships established through these systems, the EST explains students' development with a holistic perspective. Hence, the structures and events taking place at the exosystem level should not be disregarded to understand the change process. The system providing the big picture in a curricular change is the macrosystem, which is comprised of political, social, and economic factors or environments around students (Christensen, 2016). Thus, the macrosystem is the political context proposing curricular change within the educational system. Finally, the EST comprises

the chronosystem explaining the role of time in students' learning as well as the curricular change implementation (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). By considering the chronosystem within the big picture, change will be understood better since it might offer time points during a curricular change process such as before a mandated curriculum or after its first-year implementation. In short, a curricular change initiated to produce great effects on students' learning should be discussed within the systems influencing their learning as well.

On the other hand, EFL studies on the curricular changes around the world mostly depict the practical problems qualitatively (see e.g., Fang, 2012; Mwanza & Mkandawire, 2020) or evaluate them within the context of educational change or country setting (see e.g., Carles & Harfitt, 2013; Kaplan, Baldauf & Kamwangamalu, 2011). In other words, they have a lack of understanding of curriculum change implementation "as part of a larger eco-system" (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2019, p. 14). In this regard, there is a need for an understanding of students' development and learning as a whole within a theory, i.e., EST. However, there is only one study discussing curricular change within the framework of EST (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019) in the knowledge base, which is a review addressing all the disciplines around the world. On the other hand, the focus of curriculum analysis is shifting from curriculum redesign to curriculum implementation (OECD, 2019). Therefore, more studies offering ways for better implementation as well as adoption are needed. Furthermore, the increasing number of qualitative research requires another means of understanding how they contribute to that field (Erwin, Brotherson, & Summers, 2011). In this sense, more qualitative studies regarding the EST are needed for not only deepening the knowledge base but also proposing better ways for curriculum implementation. Hence, a meta-synthesis on a curricular change might be useful to uncover what has to be done for curricular change adoption. In other words, by examining the studies through a meta-synthesis, it is intended to reveal the common factors affecting curricular change implementation in EFL. It is aimed to reveal the ways for the adoption by understanding the small and big pictures of these changes. Moreover, curricular changes around the world mostly comprise CLT (see e.g., Adamson & Yin, 2008; Zare & Sarab, 2020) as mentioned earlier, therefore, it might be considered within the big picture as the global aspect of EFL education. On the other hand, the implementation process within the small picture is shaped by local constraints. In this regard, to understand curricular change, it should be discussed within the contexts of both educational change and the systems affecting students' development. Thus, focusing on the global-wide studies reflecting the curricular change process, this study aims to reach a comprehensible synthesis that could offer solutions for curricular change adoption. For this purpose, the questions below were raised:

1. What are the common factors hindering the effective curricular change implementation in EFL according to the previous studies?
2. What is the final synthesis that can guide an effective curricular change adoption?

Method

This study employed a qualitative meta-synthesis, which produces results from a systematic, structured, and credible analysis of qualitatively acquired knowledge within a field with a synthesizing approach (Thorne, 2008). Hence, to seek expansion with an integrative conclusion and explore the ways for effective curricular change adoption in EFL, the processes

recommended by Howell-Major and Savin-Baden (2010) were conducted in the following headings:

Literature Search Procedure and Inclusion Criteria

The literature search procedure undertaken from March 2021 to May 2021 included screening and selection processes. In the screening process, the articles were listed by using keywords and databases. The selection procedure includes the reading process, in which the articles were excluded based on the inclusion criteria. Accordingly, K-12 EFL curricular implementation, qualitative studies utilizing teachers as data sources, and the publication year were set as the inclusion criteria for the sample of this study since it was needed to be specific regarding the curricular change implementation level and the research design for the study focus. Also, the time period between 2010 and 2020 was set as another inclusion criterion as it was aimed to reach updated data. In the first screening phase, 2821 articles were listed (see Figure 1). In the selection process, their abstracts and titles were read first. Accordingly, 2728 articles were removed since they addressed curricular implementation in other disciplines; adopted quantitative or mixed-methods designs and they were published before 2010. Then, the remaining articles ($n=93$) were read in detail so that all the articles meeting the inclusion criteria could be designated as potential articles. Accordingly, the articles adopting quantitative, mixed-methods, documentation, and review ($n=12$); examining English teachers' curriculum and material usage ($n=26$); utilizing students as data sources ($n=2$) were excluded. Consequently, 53 articles were selected as potential studies. Meanwhile, the detailed reading process pointed out the need for another literature search procedure as the selected articles particularly focused on CLT initiation, and the keywords related to CLT initiations were not used in the first screening process. Therefore, "communicative language teaching" as a keyword was combined with "reform" and "innovation" by using the Boolean operators (OR and AND) in the second screening. In this process, 154 articles were screened and as most of them were duplicated, they were read in detail. Thus, five articles were found to be potential for the sample of the study. After that, a final detailed reading was conducted with 58 articles. Hence, the articles on teachers' material use, a professional development intervention, literacy education, higher education, and curriculum use ($n=5$); using students as data sources ($n=2$); prospective teachers as data sources ($n=1$); adopting a survey design ($n=3$); adopting a document analysis ($n=1$); adopting mixed methods ($n=4$); a review or an analysis on foreign language education ($n=3$) published before 2010 ($n=8$) were also excluded. The overall literature search procedure before ensuring the quality of the articles is displayed in Figure 1.

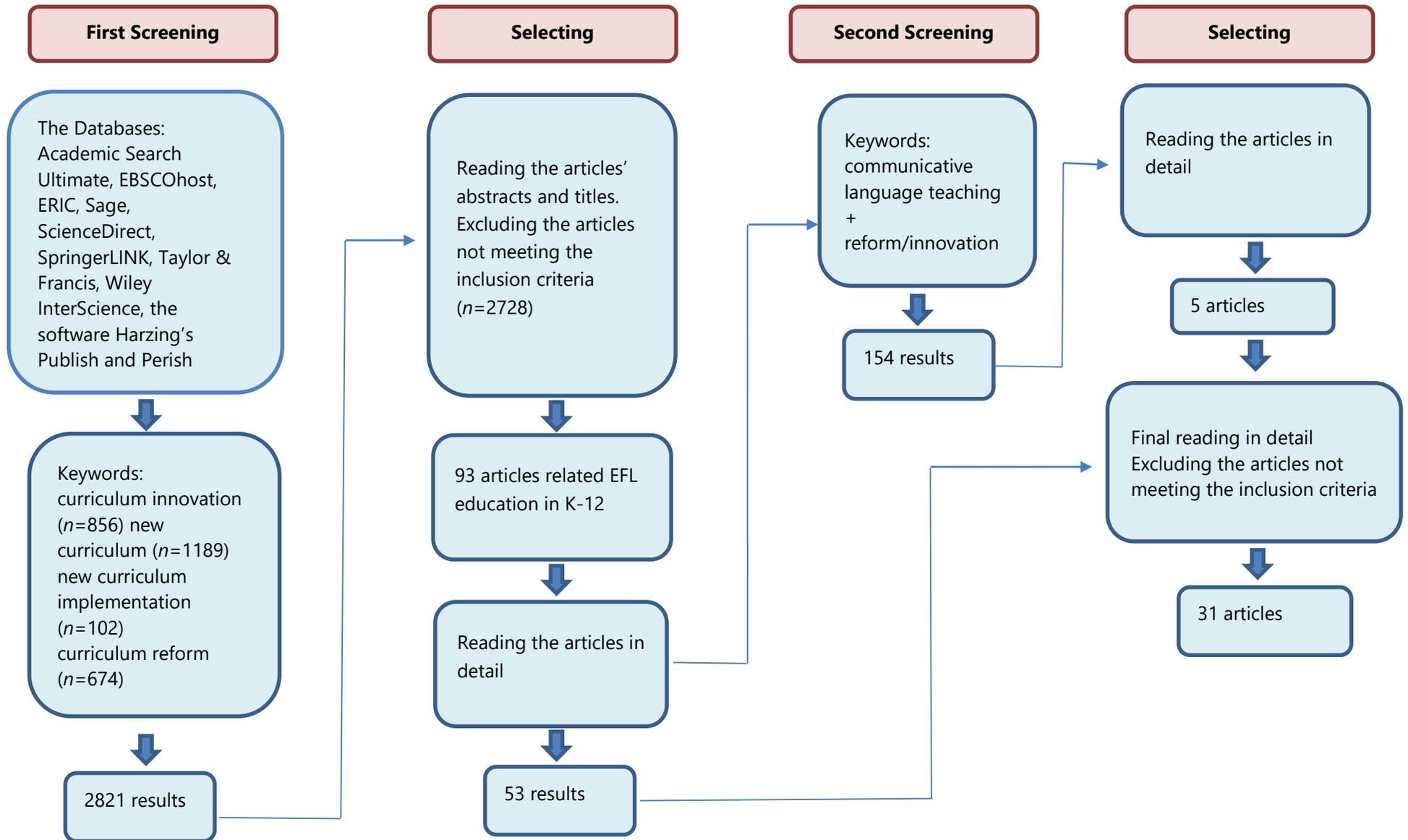


Figure 1. *The Literature Search Procedure of the Study*

The Selection of the Studies

The quality of the methodology and credibility can be accomplished by assessing the congruence between the research question, methods, and efforts towards plausibility (Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Therefore, the checklist (Erwin et al., 2011) including questions about the study's research problem, purpose, method, findings, discussions, and implications was utilized. Accordingly, the study scored as 11-15 is highly overall standards of quality and credibility; the one scored as 6-10 is moderate overall standards, and when it is scored as 1-5, it is low overall standards (Erwin et al., 2011). Hence, 31 articles were scored by two researchers separately. During this scoring process, one of the studies focusing on adult education was detected and excluded. When the scoring process ended, two researchers decided on the sample of the studies by calculating the means of the scores as well as sharing their opinions on the articles' details. Accordingly, 16 articles including studies from Türkiye, Japan, Colombia, South Korea, China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh were scored as highly overall standards of quality and credibility by two researchers. Then, the sample of the study was discussed through debriefing. Firstly, an article from each of them was included in the sample of the study ($n=7$). Then, one latest article from Türkiye, China, and Japan was added to the sample as there was more than one article from these countries. Since the quality appraisal provided a good familiarity with the studies' findings, it was decided that 10 studies would be appropriate to present all the data. Hence, the study was conducted with 10 articles considered a comprehensive sample, which does not make the analysis impossible (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The details about the sample of the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Studies Included in the Qualitative Meta-Synthesis*

	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Participants</i>
S1	Aguas (2020)	Colombia	To explore curriculum innovation from the key stakeholders' perspectives.	Eight teachers, two school administrators, two parents
S2	Dincer & Koç (2020)	Türkiye	To explore the needs and ideas of EFL teachers in the new system and the challenges that they might face.	Seven teachers
S3	Glasgow (2015)	Japan	To illustrate how teachers play a critical role in interpreting, negotiating, and resisting language policies in education, an area of language-in-education policy and planning.	Three teachers
S4	Liu & Wang (2019)	China	To glean the lived experiences of teachers in the mandated curriculum change.	Ten teachers
S5	Nguyen & Bui (2016)	Vietnam	To investigate the teachers' attitudes towards the government-initiated English policies in Vietnam and to what extent the teachers possess the capacity for change.	15 teachers

Table 1 (Cont.)

S6	Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu (2016)	Türkiye	To provide a deeper understanding of the classroom implementation of the curriculum with an action-oriented approach.	Four teachers
S7	Rahman, Pandian & Kaur (2018)	Bangladesh	To explore the factors affecting English teachers' implementation of the CLT curriculum in secondary schools.	Eight teachers
S8	Trent (2014)	South Korea	To consider teachers' experiences of curriculum innovation by investigating identity.	Three teachers and three headteachers of the English department
S9	Underwood (2012)	Japan	To explore the personal, social, and context-related factors that Japanese teachers believe this could influence their teaching of grammar in the context of communication-oriented instruction, a central component in the new curriculum.	Ten teachers
S10	Yan (2015)	China	To pinpoint context-specific factors leading to the frequent occurrence of an implementation gap.	Ten senior teachers

*S stands for the study included in the meta-synthesis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was undertaken through the steps (Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Firstly, all the findings from the articles were identified and moved into the tables developed through a Microsoft Excel sheet. Meanwhile, the themes [e.g., aligned curriculum and political aims (Aguas, 2020), teachers' perceptions of 'Teaching English in English' (Glasgow, 2015), balanced philosophies in language teaching (Liu & 2019), teachers' resistance to the new language policy implementation (Nguyen & Bui, 2016),], as well as codes [e.g., stress and anxiety (Dincer & Koç, 2019), topic-centered language usage and lexis (Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016), teachers' needs and orientation to the curriculum (Rahman et al., 2018)] developed originally by the authors, were added to the tables. Also, the articles (S5, S8, S9, S10) reporting their findings through overarching themes were reread, and the codes under each theme were identified. Secondly, the themes of the articles were translated into the themes addressing the research questions, referring to the second-order interpretation before the final synthesis (Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). In other words, the original themes were translated into the new themes by reading the direct quotes from the studies. For instance, Aguas (2020, p.3468) reported the quote starting with "What we going to do now? How are we going to do this? ..." under the theme of the ability to face uncertainty and challenges. On

the other hand, Dincer and Koç (2019, pp. 32, 33) presented the code of stress and anxiety with the support of this quote; "I felt nervous at the beginning of the semester because I didn't know anything about the program ...". Hence, they were grouped or clustered under the lack of guidance in the second-order interpretation by considering them as a hindering factor. Moreover, the second-order interpretations together with the findings were rearranged to check for any misinterpretation or misfit. During this process, new codes (e.g., the need for locally developed materials and different teaching purposes) emerged since the quotes indicated the teachers' need for locally developed materials in addition to their struggle with instructions in terms of high-stakes testing. Then, the themes were organized within the context of the EST by putting the student in the centre of implementation. For instance, the themes generated for teachers were taken under micro-level factors as they are directly related to the implementation process around the student. Lastly, the third-order interpretation leading to the final synthesis was generated by rereading the data and second-order interpretations. Figure 2 exemplifies the analysis process in the study.

	A	B	C	D
1	Second-Order Interpretation	The Studies	Organizing the Second-Order Interpretation within Ecological System Theory	Third-Order Interpretation
2	1. Lack of guidance		<p>two teachers indicated the use of memorization as a technique for evaluation. Mete dictated question forms on transportation and required his pupils to memorize those forms. Nur required her students to write the words she delivered as handout for five-times. (S6)</p> <p>T5 pointed out that "There should be a training program at the beginning of the semester to inform us about the process and new program. Since there was not an informative activity, we had to design our courses in terms of our own knowledge and materials. Also, there wasn't any kind of information about the assessment, and again, we had to prepare our own evaluation exams." S2</p> <p>According to T-2: Students' errors should be corrected. Otherwise, they will be permanent. In written language, you cannot commit errors as marks will be deducted in the exam. In speaking, sometimes, minor errors can be tolerated; however, not often. (S7)</p>	Improving teachers' beliefs on the instrumentality of curricular change Continuous support for constructing settings Dyadic communication at vertical level
3	a. For implementation	S1, S2		
4	b. For assessment in CLT	S6, S2,S7		
5	Lack of information about the curriculum	S3, S4, S6, S9, S10		
6	c. Inadequate professional development			
7	The qualifications of the teacher educators regarding CLT, multiculturalism, mixed-ability classes	S5, S7, S10		
8	The limited number of professional developments	S2, S5		
9	2. Dealing with political aims			Macro level factors
10	Politic expectations	S1		
11	Uncertainty	S3		
12	3. Demanding curriculum		macro level factors	Improving teachers' beliefs on the instrumentality of curricular change Coherence in message Dyadic communication at vertical level
13	Overloaded	S2, S5		
14	Mandated curriculum	S2, S5, S7		
15	Lack of time	S7, S9, S10		
	4. Lack of support			Improving teachers' beliefs on the instrumentality of curricular change Continuous support for constructing settings

Figure 2. The Examples of Second- and Third-Order Interpretations Arranged with Data and the EST

Results

The results obtained from data analyses were presented based on the research questions. Accordingly, the results on the common factors hindering effective curricular change, and then, the final synthesis for effective adoption were explained in the following headings.

The Common Factors Hindering Effective Curricular Change Implementation

The findings on the common factors hindering the effective curricular change implementation were organized under the micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors since the studies' findings indicated factors related to those levels (see Figure 3). Besides, any factors related to the exosystem level were not observed in the studies as they argued the implementation problems at the classroom, school, and national levels.

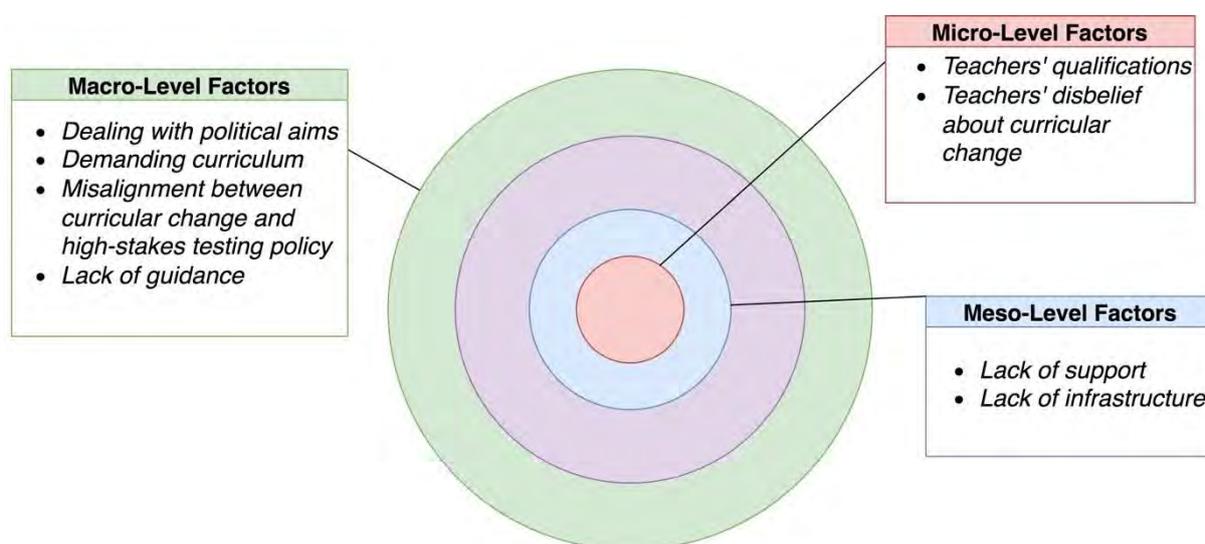


Figure 3. Common Factors Hindering the Effective Curricular Change Implementation Throughout the Systems

Macro-level factors.

Dealing with the political aims. The political expectations (Aguas, 2020) and uncertainty (Glasgow, 2015) constituted this theme. Teachers needed to understand the political expectation with each curricular change. *"Aligned curriculum, I think is an organized and planned syllabus that the government –with some specialists– have created for public schools in Colombia to follow."* (Aguas, 2020, p.3468). Furthermore, there should not be any uncertainty related to the curricular change message. *"Ryoko: I read about it in the newspaper[...]. In senior high school, English classes are taught only in English, not Japanese. That's my understanding if I understand correctly."* (Glasgow, 2015, p.159). In short, dealing with the political aims is a hindering factor at the macro-level.

Demanding curriculum. The studies also implied the problems arising with the curriculum itself (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015). Dincer and Koç (2020, p.35) explained the overloaded curriculum factor regarding students' age: *"In the new curriculum, there are 40 units, and some of the themes given in these units are too confusing and abstract for young learners. I think it is impossible to complete all of the units in one year, so it should be narrowed in terms of the cognitive abilities and needs of*

young learners." However, in Nguyen & Bui (2016, p.94), teachers complained about this kind of problem regarding minority students: *"If I were able to change our current teaching practices, the first thing I would like to do is reduce the content and increase the time available for teaching to help minority students to learn all of the material presented in a class thoroughly..."* Additionally, a mandated curriculum seemed to be a factor hindering the implementation since teachers needed space to be more flexible or adapt the curriculum according to their students' needs. For instance; *"CLT emphasizes speaking in English, but we cannot do that often in the classroom. The classroom has its own demand. Mixing both languages makes it easier for our students to understand. Policymakers can say anything; it is us who knows how to adapt..."* (Rahman et al., 2018, p.1114). Thirdly, lack of time was another factor related to the curriculum itself. Since a demanding curriculum required more time, teachers had difficulty in allocating time for its implementation process, which was illustrated in the following: *"...we don't have enough time to do so with so many teaching tasks to accomplish and a set of exercises to mark."* (Yan, 2015, p.13). Hence, an overloaded curriculum, as well as a mandated curriculum, and a lack of time because of such a demanding curriculum constituted factors related to the curriculum itself at the macro-level.

Misalignment between the curricular change and high-stakes testing policy. Most of the studies emphasized that there was a misalignment between the curricular change and the high-stakes testing policy, which was a great obstacle to the adoption of the change (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabiyik, & Daloğlu, 2016). For instance, Nguyen and Bui (2016, p. 94) conveyed teachers' confusion as in the following:

I am very concerned about the targeting of communicative English learning by our Ministry of Education, especially as no changes have been made to the evaluation method. What can I do, as just one teacher? When I, along with many other teachers, questioned the evaluation method in our national training workshop, our trainers told us not to blame our Ministry of Education, because they are trying to make changes. But I am forced to ask myself when these changes will happen.

Hence, teachers showed orientation towards the demands of the exams. *"... English is evaluated via tests in state examinations. Therefore, I want children to get used to the tests."* (Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016, p.52). This orientation might be because of the parents' expectations. *"... parents are very strong, they want us to teach perfect English to pass the entrance exam, not practical English."* (Glasgow, 2015, p.157).

Lack of guidance. As mentioned earlier, any theme addressing the exosystem level was not generated. Actually, this kind of guidance is supposed to be within the city or region-level (exosystem); however, it was argued together with curricular change introduction at the national level (macro-level) in the studies. Thus, it was considered a macro-level factor. When teachers did not know how to implement curricular change, they might feel nervous and question the curricular change as stated in Dincer and Koç (2020, p.33): *"I felt nervous at the beginning of the semester because I didn't know anything about the program, and also there have been lots of new themes and units. So, I think that the curriculum is too heavy to apply with young learners, and it made me nervous."* Besides, teachers had difficulty in understanding how to assess students according to CLT, which was described best by Dincer and Koç (2020, p.35) again: *"...Since there was not an informative activity, we had to design our courses in terms of*

our own knowledge and materials. Also, there wasn't any kind of information about the assessment, and again, we had to prepare our own evaluation exams." It was also observed in the studies (Rahman et al., 2018; Yeni-Palabıyık & Dalođlu, 2016).

Moreover, teachers interpreted the curricular change by themselves, which indicated their lack of information about the curriculum resulted from the lack of guidance (Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Dalođlu, 2016). For instance, Glasgow (2015, p.156) reported a teacher's confusion about the first language usage with the curricular change:

Teacher: hmm... is it a rough (laughs) 80%?

Researcher: what do you think the other 20% is for?

Teacher: Grammar explanations, yeah, and... especially grammar explanations."

Also, practices similar to this kind of interpretation were observed in the studies, as well (Liu & Wang, 2019; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Dalođlu, 2016).

Lastly, the studies indicated a lack of guidance because of the inadequate professional development activities at the macro-level (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Yan, 2015). Accordingly, teacher trainers were not qualified enough in terms of CLT and multiculturalism, mixed-ability classes. *"All the training programmes advocate student-centred communicative approaches, but ironically the teacher trainers use didactic methods themselves. If they were in our position, how would they teach? They don't seem to understand our predicaments at all."* (Yan, 2015, p.13). Besides, Nguyen and Bui (2016, p.96) illustrated teachers' need for teacher trainers, who are qualified in multiculturalism and mixed ability classes as well: *"How can I make English more relevant to reality, how should I teach English to minority students who are not yet fluent in Vietnamese?"*. Also, the studies revealed the number of professional developments is inadequate. *"A two-week workshop every summer did not improve our teaching at all."* (Nguyen & Bui, 2016, p.96). *"There should be a training program at the beginning of the semester to inform us about the process and new programme..."* (Dincer & Koç, 2020, p.35). The lack of guidance resulting from inadequate professional development activities was uncovered as a factor hindering the curricular change adoption.

Meso-level factors.

Lack of support. When teachers were not supported by their colleagues and students, they had difficulty in implementation (Aguas, 2020; Dincer & Koç, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018; Trent, 2014; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015). For instance, Trent (2014, p.71) exhibited a colleague's opposing ideas to innovative practices:

(Andrew) has brought with him some good teaching ideas, but his ideas are not so suitable in our (school) context. As I told him, tasks, language games, and communicative teaching cannot be easily applied in this school because the discipline is poor and in group work students get off task... games and activities like that are fine after school, our NET (native English-speaking teacher) does that in the English room already... we never use games and activities in class in this school... (Ronald)

Also, teachers needed students' support while implementing a curricular change: *"Students show unwillingness to participate in the tasks, and they would rather learn grammar by conventional GT (Grammar translation) method... If the tasks cannot be practiced, then how the*

curriculum would, can be implemented?" (Rahman et al., 2018, p.1113). Moreover, the administrators' support was also important in the curricular change implementation (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Underwood, 2012). *"School management always supports us while designing courses and it also supplies financial support for the materials. Additionally, the management informed parents about the new program, and it makes progress easier for us."* (Dincer & Koç, 2020, p.33). Hence, with the support of administrators, the implementation process might become easier for teachers.

Furthermore, the studies displayed that lack of communication, collaboration, and ownership might be another indicator of the lack of support at the school level. According to Aguas (2020, p.3469), building relationships at the school level was crucial, and it could be only achieved through communication: *"Because we have to be more connected, more communicative, and more interactive. We need to share more experiences."* Similarly, a good collaboration among teachers is needed for a decent implementation process, which was described in Trend (2012, p.69):

I tried some TBL (task-based learning) activities in some of my lower form classes... some teachers are like me, they agree with this approach, so we have started a small group that shares some materials and lessons. Some other teachers won't follow us, and those outside our group are locked in old-fashioned teaching ways...so we, our TBL group of teachers, just talk amongst ourselves and we don't interact with the other English teachers much in terms of sharing... later, they might accept our ideas, I hope the others might see the problems with boring rote learning and follow us.

Lastly, the lack of ownership might cause a lack of support at the school level as it was stated by Aguas (2020, p.3469): *"OK, the factors that influence the implementation of a new curriculum could be everybody's involvement with what the institution wants."* Therefore, communication, collaboration, and a sense of ownership constituted the needed support for a curricular implementation, which is expected from all the stakeholders at the school level.

Lack of infrastructure. Providing sufficient materials was crucial in implementing curricular change (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015). *"... I have to design all of the courses by myself, and it is very challenging for me. If I get a coursebook, I can improve the language skills of students more easily."* (Dincer & Koç, 2020, p.34). Similarly, the quality of the materials was also important for a decent implementation process (Liu and Wang, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018). *"Needless to say, textbooks came with a CD that contains minimum listening skill exercises. However, we are still unable to practice it in the classroom because we do not even have the technology that is needed to play the CD."* (Rahman et al., 2018, p.1115). Besides, the teachers had difficulty implementing the new curriculum because they found the materials inappropriate for students' needs and cognitive levels as they were globally developed (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Rahman et. al, 2018). *"When we first used the new material, we were merely sure about the type of contents to teach in the classroom. They were completely foreign to us as well as to the learners. Now, with several revisions, materials are more contextualized, making them more suited for the student's needs and learning process."* (Rahman et al., 2018, p.1115). Large classes constituting the lack of infrastructure were another factor hindering the implementation as CLT activities require space and time (Rahman et al., 2018; Yan, 2015). *"It is not realistic to have a creative and free classroom environment because the class is big. The facilities are*

outdated, and we have to finish the required content each time." (Yan, 2015, p.13). Consequently, the lack of infrastructure was found to be a hindering factor at the meso-level.

Micro-level factors.

Teachers' qualifications. The studies indicated teachers could not implement the curricular change effectively because of their lack of pedagogical knowledge about CLT (Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016). For example, Nguyen and Bui (2016) stated teachers feel unconfident about teaching speaking and listening skills; whereas, Yan (2015, p.12) reported a direct quote; *"I want to use the communicative approach, but I don't know how to carry it out because I only know the theoretical terms."* Also, it was exemplified in a study by Yeni-Palabiyik and Daloğlu (2016) via classroom observation. Similarly, the teachers' lack of experience in CLT hinders the implementation, which was best illustrated in a study by Rahman et al. (2018): *"Initially, we did not know what CLT is; however, over the course of time, things have clearly changed..."* Another factor hindering an effective implementation is related to the teachers' status as being non-native speakers of English (Glasgow, 2015; Underwood, 2012), which is displayed as follows.

I think it's embarrassing for me, especially in class as a teacher. I want to use English all the time. But once I switch to Japanese I keep using Japanese, I don't know why, maybe embarrassing for me, because they know I am Japanese and I am not a native speaker and my pronunciation is bad so they, so some students who can speak English very much, how to say, they speak at a high speed and I cannot understand what they said. But they enjoy it, and I feel embarrassed (Glasgow, 2015, p.158).

Lastly, teachers' previous teaching experience or habits is also a factor affecting their curricular implementation. According to Aguas (2020), a new curriculum aroused teachers' previous teaching experience and made them redefine their professional and curricular practices, whereas Yan (2015) indicated teachers' pedagogical inadequacy resulted from their adherence to the long-established teacher-centred approaches. *"The focus of language learning has been traditionally grammar-based and emphasizes written form of language. My teachers were really strict and as a student, you just needed to listen, take notes, and obey."* (Yan, 2015, p.12). Similarly, the studies (Liu & Wang, 2019; Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016) demonstrated teachers' form-focused instructions through the observations. For instance, *"After dealing with the key vocabulary of the text, Che (teacher) began to deal with the major grammar items of the lesson: verbs followed by -ing form and verbs followed by an infinitive."* (Liu & Wang, 2019, p.11). Consequently, it was found that the teachers could not implement the curricular change properly, and they followed the traditional instructions they were accustomed to.

Teachers' disbelief about curricular change. When teachers believe that the curricular change will not foster a student's improvement, they display an unwillingness to implement it, which was best illustrated in the following example: *"I feel grammar provides the basic framework for your communication. If you don't have solid grammar as the foundation, there is nowhere to build communication. If we get students to do tons of talking and tons of writing, but they are all wrong, then what's the point?"* (Liu & Wang, 2019, p.7). Besides, Nguyen and Bui (2016, p.93) reported this kind of disbelief concerning minority students: *"... Why, then, do we have to teach the language so intensively? Why are the students required to study so hard? We*

are forced to ask what students are gaining from these policies. Many minority students have asked me why they have to learn English." Furthermore, Rahman and colleagues (2018, p.1113) noted that reflecting teachers' needs on the curricular change is crucial for the implementation: *"I came to know about the new curriculum after joining the school training session. Our needs were not reflected in the curriculum, particularly on the aspects of speaking and listening, which most of us have a problem in practicing."* As seen in the quote, when the target of the curricular change differed from teachers' beliefs in what to teach, they had difficulty in the implementation.

The Synthesis for an Effective Curricular Change Adoption

The second question, which is about the final synthesis to guide an effective curricular change adoption was answered through the findings of the first question. Accordingly, the findings on the first question indicated a lack of coordination resulting from weaknesses in the interactions among the systems affecting students' learning. Therefore, the synthesis pointed out that the improvement of the interactions is needed to enhance the coordination and establish the connection among the systems. In this context, the synthesis, as well as the findings on the first question noted two main interaction improvements. The first one is about teachers' interactions with curricular change at the micro-level. It is the personal aspect of the relationships that teachers develop towards curricular change. The second interaction is related to teachers' beliefs in the long-term instrumentality of the curricular change process. As a final synthesis, it was uncovered that the improvement of these interactions helps constitute not only good coordination through the systems but also the structures and contexts needed for implementation.

Improving teachers' personal interactions with curricular change.

Although most of the studies reported teachers' adoption of the relative benefit of curricular change at the beginning, they proposed their difficulty in implementation later (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016). Then, teachers tended to turn to old practices and showed emotional and personal reactions towards change such as feeling *unconfident* (Nguyen & Bui, 2016, p.96), and *nervous* (Dincer & Koç, 2020, p.33). To improve their personal interactions with curricular change and to understand these reactions and their rationality, the findings on the micro-level factors implied a need for understanding the subjectivity of change, teachers' qualifications, and effects of socio-historical events on implementation.

The studies revealed that teachers interpreted curricular change differently during the introduction phase (Aguas, 2020; Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016). These interpretations were about their efforts to construct settings for implementation. However, the observations on their actual practices clearly showed how they failed in implementation (Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabiyik & Daloğlu, 2016), which might be explained through the subjectivity of change. Dealing with already different kinds of daily tasks, workloads, and problems, teachers face building new meanings with curricular change, and those meanings are expected to be compatible with the proposed change. In fact, curricular change at the micro-level has more different meanings than the targeted ones. These meanings attached to curricular change at

the micro-level cause the implementation to lurch, which is contrary to the macro-level expectations. Thus, understanding the subjectivity of change was revealed as one of the ways to improve teachers' personal interactions with curricular change.

Secondly, the studies presented that teachers' qualifications are the influential factors in an effective implementation (Aguas, 2020; Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016). The curricular change implementation is related to teachers' professional performance (Aguas, 2020, p.3468). Thus, the synthesis pointed to another requirement, which is the identification of teachers' qualifications before proposing a curricular change since it will help plan the interventions for a decent implementation and adoption.

Thirdly, teachers tended to practice their previous teaching experiences in contrast to the instruction prescribed in the curricular change (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016). At this point, the synthesis implied the importance of the effects of socio-historical events within curricular change implementation. Having witnessed the same teaching methods for a long time, teachers might not change their teaching practices drastically. They might keep displaying the same manners and strategies as they are accustomed to. Shortly, the synthesis showed a need for understanding the subjectivity of change, teachers' qualifications, and the effects of socio-historical events on implementation to improve teachers' personal interactions with curricular change.

Improving teachers' beliefs in the instrumentality of curricular change.

When teachers believe in the instrumentality of curricular change, they are likely to implement and adopt it. However, the results of the studies noted that teachers dealt with ill-structured settings instead of setting contexts for implementation, which caused them to question the instrumentality of the change (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Liu & Wang, 2019; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016). In this context, the synthesis indicated continuous support for constructing settings, dyadic communication at both vertical and horizontal levels, and coherence in the message.

The studies showed the need for continuous support to construct settings at two levels. One is at the mesosystem providing infrastructure as well as support at the school level (Aguas, 2020; Dincer & Koç, 2020; Liu & Wang, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018; Trent, 2014; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016), and the other is at macrosystem enhancing the conditions to help teachers acquire needed new skills and knowledge for implementation (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Yan, 2015). The teachers in the studies complained about insufficient materials, sources, and physical settings, and also, they did not see any support from their colleagues, administrators, and students. Without any support at the meso-level, teachers, who try to construct environments and settings for implementation, quit and go back to old practices. Therefore, the synthesis revealed that continuous support including sufficient resources and physical conditions and also appreciation with a sense of ownership from stakeholders will enhance the improvement of teachers' beliefs in the instrumentality of change. Subsequently, it will build not only the

needed coordination from beginning to end but also teachers' ties with curricular change regarding its effectiveness.

Moreover, the teachers needed continuous support provided from the macro-level through appropriate professional development activities (Dincer & Koç, 2020; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Yan, 2015). Without this kind of support at the macro-level, teachers might not establish beneficial interactions with curricular change at the micro-level, and then, they fail to implement it. Knowing curricular change as only the theoretical terms (Yan, 2015, p.12), they need help to see its long-term benefits through appropriate interventions at the exo-level or macro-level.

Another requirement to improve their beliefs in the curricular change instrumentality is dyadic communication at horizontal and vertical levels. The studies reported teachers' confusion about curricular change and the policy behind it (Aguas, 2020; Dincer & Koç, 2020; Liu & Wang, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016). When they do not establish a mutual understanding of change as a process at both meso- and macro-levels, they have difficulty in implementation. Therefore, the synthesis displayed both dyadic communication from micro-level to macro-level and the one between colleagues horizontally as they might ease the curricular implementation process.

Furthermore, the studies pointed to the problems with the curricular change message proposed by the macrosystem (Aguas, 2020; Glasgow, 2015; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Underwood, 2012; Yan, 2015; Yeni-Palabıyık & Daloğlu, 2016). In most of the countries included in this meta-synthesis, change policy was proposed at only the curricular level. However, the studies indicated that testing policy contradicted curricular change, which causes teachers to turn their backs on curricular change. Therefore, coherence in policy messages was included in the synthesis for improvement of teachers' belief in the instrumentality of curricular change. In other words, the synthesis indicated that from the testing policy to the college admission or teacher supervision, all should be rearranged according to curricular change at the macro-level so that the coherency of the proposed aims can be recognized at the micro-level.

As stated before, the EST notes inter-related structures and relationships within the systems (Bronferbrenner, 1979), so, any delay or problem that occurs in a system influences the others. The teachers' acceptance of the curricular change at the beginning does not mean that it will be implemented effectively, which was clearly indicated in the studies included in this meta-synthesis. When the interactions at the meso- and macro-levels are improved (see Figure 4), teachers' personal interactions with curricular change will be at the desired level at the micro-level. Then, the coordination between the systems will be ensured, as well.

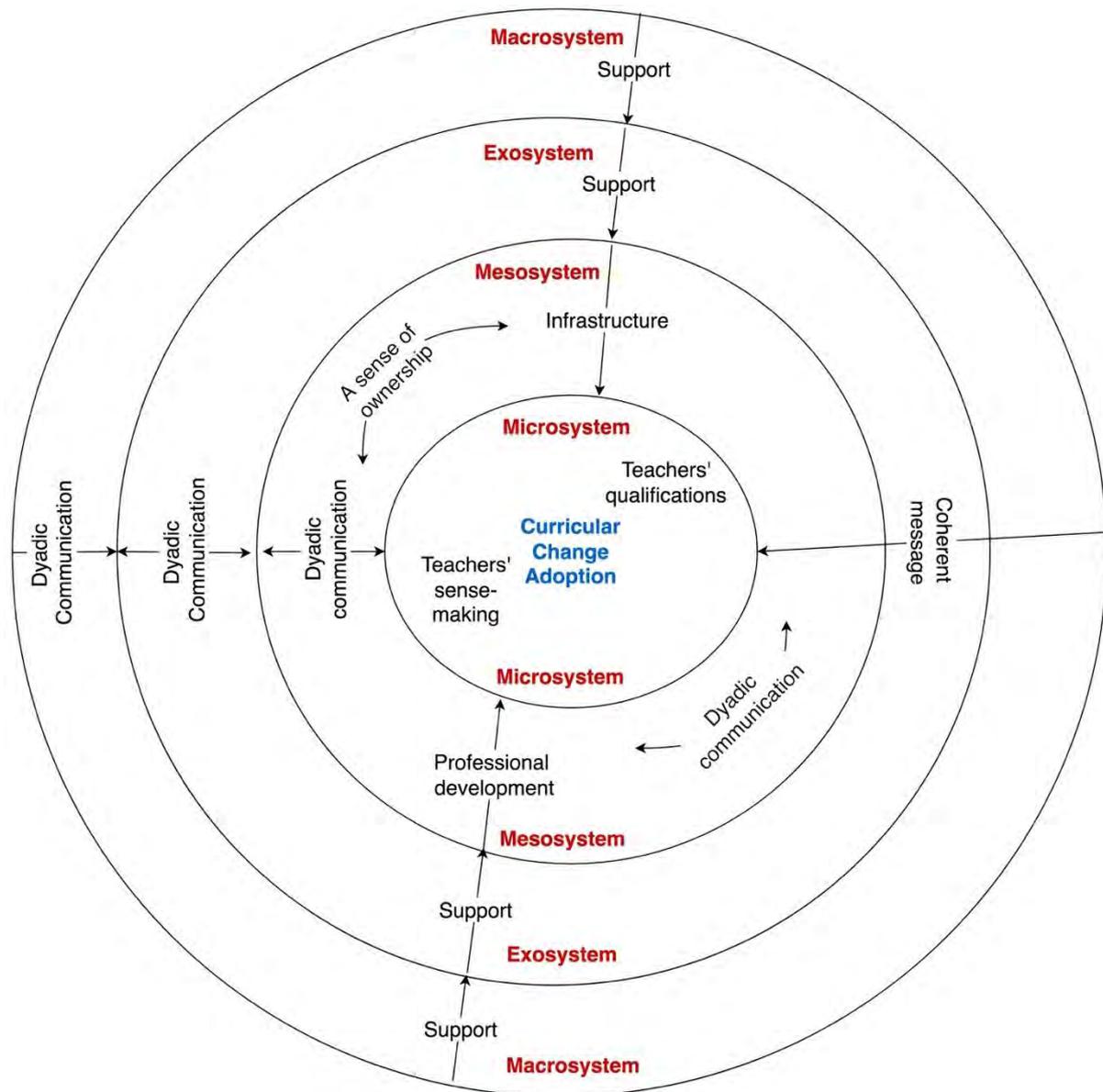


Figure 4. *The Interactions for an Effective Curricular Change Adoption Throughout the Systems*

Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

The curricular changes proposing a standardized understanding of EFL around the world note similar problems in implementation such as lack of guidance, support, infrastructures, and information. Clearly, they disregard students' non-standardized needs (Darling-Hammond, 2005) and learning environments. Viewing them through the lens of the EST revealed all the organizations from micro- to macro-levels are not structured and coordinated for the flow of the activities to start and sustain the curricular change implementation. In other words, the promotion of actions to increase acceptance and reduce the perceived uncertainty (Johannisson, 1987), is not fostered during curricular change implementation. Thus, teachers being in the centre of the implementation go back to their old practices (see, e.g., Kaplan et al., 2011; Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019).

In fact, from micro- to macro-levels, there is a need for building interactions and connections for effective curricular change adoption. Because of the inter-related structures within the systems (Bronferbrenner, 1979), any delay in any system affects the other, which consequently blocks the activity flow. Subsequently, it hinders teachers' sense-making around curricular change, which has a pivotal role in all kinds of connections between the systems (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). Some teachers might delay the implementation as they bring different kinds of meanings to the tasks (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Fullan; 2007; Hall & Hord, 2015). Accordingly, there is a need to devise ways to anticipate and facilitate change at the individual level (Hall & Hord, 2015). By doing this, the required network among teachers at the school level will be achieved, and then, the ownership of the curricular change will be ensured at the meso-level (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). Hence, from classroom to school, strong interactions for curricular change adoption will be built. Besides, no single school is likely to have all the expertise and resources needed to succeed in change, so external management in change outside of school is required (Hall & Hord, 2015). Through this external management from the exosystem, teachers' sense-making around curricular change will be shaped. Then, the mesosystem and exosystem interactions could be developed (Hall & Hord, 2015; Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). Building the capacity of teachers and schools as well as investing in both individual and organizational learning will help curricular reform accomplishment (Darling-Hammond, 2005). By supporting this argument, it was found that only one study (Aguas, 2020) depicted relatively a good curricular change implementation in this meta-synthesis, and it is from Colombia. Besides, according to English First- English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) report (2020), most of the Latin American countries investing in teacher education in recent years see a real improvement in English proficiency in 2020.

Moreover, the macrosystem proposing curricular change should not be left outside of those system connections. The macrosystem needs to support teachers' sense-making process at all levels and conditions. To do this, the first and foremost thing is coherence. If the parts of the policy system conflict with one another, the implementation at the school level will be in different directions (Darling-Hammond, 2005). In this aspect, testing policy or teacher education systems should also be aligned with the curricular change. When teachers work in self-contradictory contexts such as a microsystem expecting the curricular change implementation and a mesosystem or exosystem demanding success in the high-stakes tests, they become cynical (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Also, resource allocation sends a coherent message about the priorities (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019). Not only by allocating funds for professional development but also by providing appropriate materials and resources, the coherent message should be delivered from the macrosystem to the others. Hence, teachers will be convinced that the priority is curricular change implementation.

However, the roles of continuing communication, on-site coaching, and time for implementation (Hall & Hord, 2015) should not be disregarded in building coordination between the systems. The mutual understanding of curricular change might be achieved through communication at both horizontal and vertical levels, which is again related to teachers' sense-making. This communication should also reflect the interrelated dyadic ties (Johannisson, 1987) between the systems so that a real interaction can be built. Hence, not only the message delivered with curricular change will be understood better, but also the obstacles in the implementations will be detected and overcome. Then, the rationality behind

curricular change will be appreciated and the activity flow needed for the implementation will be ensured.

Additionally, each curricular change means new knowledge, skills, and methods to be implemented at the micro-level, and the policymakers at the macro-level need to understand that it takes time (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hall & Hord, 2015). When it is acknowledged, the interventions or communication as stated so far will be long-term as well. Nevertheless, the macro-level expecting a sudden change usually has a short-term focus centring on one formal training session (Hall & Hord, 2015), which is the case in the majority of the studies in this meta-synthesis. On the other hand, the teachers' sense-making process around curricular change requires time and continuous support. Real organizational ties can be best achieved through realization and enactment rather than planning and controlling (Johannisson, 1987). However, in most of the studies included in this study, the curricular change has just been initiated. Therefore, all the efforts with a short-term focus might turn into a waste of time and resources. Even, teachers believing in curricular change at the beginning fail in implementation since their sense-making around curricular change is not shaped by the appropriate interactions as well as coordination.

Surprisingly, the studies included in this meta-synthesis are mostly from developing countries, only Japan is a developed country (United Nations, 2020) and the majority of them are Asian countries. It is clear that many Asian countries are constrained by rural underdevelopment and the population lives in poverty (Kaplan et al., 2011). Actually, there is a correlation between a country's level of human capital and its English proficiency (EF EPI, 2020). In other words, a country with skilful and competent individuals facilitating the creation of economic well-being, and thereby increasing economic growth (Keeley, 2007) clearly outperforms in English proficiency. Apparently, English learning attempt is only facilitated through curricular reforms, and this facilitation is not achieved due to low/no investments in setting structures for curriculum implementation in these countries. For instance, outdated initial teacher education or professional development activities in developing countries is revealed in several studies (see, e.g., Kaplan et al., 2011; Westbrook, et al., 2013). In fact, countries famous for top results in international tests such as PISA and TIMSS are notified of their support for teachers as professionals. Having top results in these tests, the countries like Canada, Finland, Australia, and Singapore have systems including multiple coherent and complementary policies on recruiting qualified individuals into the teaching profession; from preparation to retention (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Singapore as a developing country might be an exemption in this context; nonetheless, it is clear that a good teacher education policy is a must for also curricular change adoption. To ensure that teachers have sufficient capacity to implement a new curriculum, investments in the different stages of the teaching profession need to be made (Gouédard, Pont, Hyttinen, & Huang, 2020). Furthermore, effecting change is difficult in developing countries since needed funding such as spending on resources, materials, and teachers' development activities are low (Kaplan et al., 2011; The World Bank, 2003). In this context, the countries investing in school-based professional development activities rather than one-shot in-service training might accomplish curricular change since successful initiations offer structural changes that provide the realignment of teachers' deeply rooted teaching practices and beliefs through teacher education, resources, and school-based teaching practices (Kazakbaeva, 2021). To conclude, the needed coordination for an effective

curricular change adoption starts with conceptualizing teacher education as a system (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In conclusion, despite being from different country settings, the studies included in this meta-synthesis revealed similar factors such as teachers' qualifications at the micro-level, lack of support and infrastructure at the meso-level, and lack of guidance or misalignment between curricular change and high-stakes testing policy at the macro-level for blocking the curricular change implementation. However, any factor related to the exosystem level was not observed in the study, which can be explained through the top-down approach in the initiation of curricular changes. In many developing countries, language policy is seen as operating at macro-levels (Kennedy, 2011) and the studies depict implementation problems of this policy at micro- and meso-levels. In this sense, it can be interpreted that the recognition of the policy or curricular change message is not fostered at all levels (Kennedy, 2011). Hence, the message with curricular change is just handed down to teachers, and they are left with the responsibility of the implementation in the end. However, teachers require time and support to develop sense-making around curricular change. This sense-making process includes personal and instrumental interactions towards curricular change. To improve these interactions, the subjectivity of change, teachers' qualifications, and the effects of socio-historical events on implementation should be understood. Also, continuous support, dyadic communication both vertically and horizontally, and coherency in the message are needed. When they are supplied throughout the systems, the connection between the systems will be built and all the needed contexts will be structured for adoption. Otherwise, even if teachers believe in the curricular change at the beginning, they are likely to question the curricular change and turn their backs on it with great cynicism. Then, the needed contexts for students' learning within the systems will be damaged.

Overall, all the systems affecting students' learning should do their share to establish appropriate conditions and contexts for curricular change adoption. Every action to be taken before, during, or after a curricular change should be considered within a big system nesting many others as the EST proposed. The interactions throughout the systems should be built so strongly that the flow of actions for a decent implementation could be ensured.

Based on the findings, the suggestions can be offered mostly at the macro-level in this study because of top-down orientations in the curricular changes. Firstly, when designing a curriculum adopting a global approach, local realities and needs should be analysed better at the macro-level. Secondly, a coherent message should be delivered with curricular change. For a coherent message, the other policies such as testing policy, college admission, or teacher education policy should be addressed within the curricular reform as they have a role in the implementation. Also, curricular change should be supported by allocating funds for resources, materials, and interventions. The needed teacher education interventions should be planned according to curricular change demands. With lifelong learning understanding, school-based professional developments should be designed for effective curricular change implementation. The realization and enactment of curricular change rather than planning and controlling should be targeted. At the micro-level, teachers should appreciate curricular change efforts displayed in other systems, and they should be enthusiastic about being role models for both colleagues and students. Lastly, by being aware of the change as a process, they should display patience for curricular change effectiveness on students.

Focusing on only EFL studies might be regarded as a limitation in this study. On the other hand, the researchers can build a procedure and set boundaries considering the variety of literature to date in the knowledge base in the meta-synthesis (Howell-Major & Saven-Baden, 2010). In this sense, we as the researchers wanted to investigate the curricular change implementation process since our research interests centre around curriculum implementation and innovation studies. Therefore, innovation studies on other disciplines might be investigated for better understanding for further studies. Also, studies addressing successful curricular change implementations might be argued within the context of the EST. Besides, the arguments within the innovation studies such as interventions or change leadership might be analysed as well.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Yabancı Dil Eğitiminde Öğretim Programı Değişimlerinin Etkili Bir Şekilde Benimsenmesi Arayışı: Bir Meta-Sentez Çalışması

Giriş

Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi alanyazını öğrenci merkezli, iletişimsel yaklaşım temelli öğretim programı reformlarının öğretmenler tarafından benimsenemediğini ve uygulamada sorunlar yaşandığını ortaya koymaktadır (ör., Adamson & Yin, 2008; Zare & Sarab, 2020). Ancak herhangi bir öğretim programı değişimi; öğrenme ve öğretme sürecini etkileyen birden fazla sistemde iç içe olduğundan (Taguma & Fernandez-Barrera, 2019), öğrenci öğrenmelerine odaklanan program değişikliklerinin uygulanması bu sistemlerin dışında düşünülemez. Dolayısıyla öğretim programı değişimlerinin öğrencilerin çevresinde kurulan sistemler bağlamında, başka bir deyişle Ekolojik Sistem Teorisi (EST) çerçevesinde ele alınması yararlı olabilir. Bronfenbrenner (1979) tarafından ileri sürülen EST, öğrenci gelişimini onun etrafında yapılandırılmış karmaşık katmanlı ortamlar ve bu ortamlar arasındaki etkileşimler aracılığıyla açıklamaktadır. Temelde mikro, mezo, ekzo ve makrosistem olmak üzere dört ana sistem sunan EST; bu sistemler içerisinde birbiriyle ilişkili ve bağlantılı yapıların varlığından da söz eder (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Kurama göre sınıf mikrosistem okul mezosistem, bölge ya da şehir ekzosistem ve ulusal bağlam da makrosistem olarak ele alınmaktadır. EST temele alınarak yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitiminde uygulamaya konulan öğretim programlarındaki değişimlerin öğretmenler tarafından benimsenmesine yönelik önerilerin geliştirilmesi için, bu alanda yapılmış nitel çalışmaların meta-sentez yöntemi kullanılarak ele alınması yararlı olabilir. Bu bağlamda çalışmada, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce dersindeki öğretim programı değişimlerini yansıtan farklı ülkelerdeki nitel araştırmalar ele alınmış ve aşağıdaki sorulara cevap aranmıştır:

1. Yapılan nitel araştırmalara göre, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitiminde sunulan öğretim programı değişikliklerinin uygulanma sürecini engelleyen ortak etkenler nelerdir?
2. Bir öğretim programı değişiminin öğretmenler tarafından etkili bir şekilde benimsenmesi için yol gösterici son sentez nedir?

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada, meta-sentez yöntemi kullanılmıştır ve alanyazın taraması, çalışmaların seçilmesi ve veri analizi adımları (Howell-Major & Saven-Baden, 2010) takip edilmiştir. Buna göre Mart-Mayıs 2021 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilen alanyazın taramasında ilk aşamada listelenen çalışmalar ($n=2821$) tekrarlı okumalar yoluyla elenmiştir. Bu aşamada dâhil edilme ölçütleri olan yayım tarihi (2010-2021 yılları arasında yayımlanan çalışmalar), yöntem (sadece nitel çalışmalar) ve odağa (K-12 EFL'de program değişikliği uygulamaları) göre elemeler

yapılmıştır ($n=2728$). Kalan makaleler detaylı olarak okunmuş ve nicel, karma yöntem, doküman incelemesi ve derleme çalışmaları olan makaleler ($n=12$), İngilizce öğretmenlerinin program ve materyal uygulamalarına odaklanan makaleler ($n=26$) ile veri kaynağı olarak öğrencilerle yapılmış çalışmalar ($n=2$) elenmiş ve böylece ilk detaylı okuma aşamasında 53 makale seçilmiştir. Diğer taraftan bu detaylı okuma aşaması, seçilen makalelerin özellikle iletişimsel dil öğretiminin (CLT) başlatılmasına odaklandığı göstermiş ve ilk taramada bununla ilgili anahtar kelimeler kullanılmadığı için yeni bir tarama yapılmasına ihtiyaç duyulmuştur. Bu nedenle, ikinci taramada Boole operatörleri (OR ve AND) kullanılarak "iletişimsel dil öğretimi", "reform" ve "yenilik" sözcükleriyle birleştirilmiştir. Böylece 154 sonuç listelenmiş ve bu sonuçların çoğunlukla daha önce listelenen sonuçlar olduğu gözlemlenmiş o nedenle detaylı okumaya tabi tutulmuştur. Böylece dâhil edilme ölçütlerine göre beş tanesinin uygun olduğu görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak yöntemi ve konusu nedeniyle bu çalışmanın odağı dışındaki diğer araştırmalar da elenerek ($n=27$), ilk aşamadaki 53 ve ikinci aşamadaki beş çalışmadan seçilen toplam 31 araştırma, değerlendirilmek üzere ayrılmıştır. Daha sonra, bu 31 çalışma Erwin ve diğerleri (2011) tarafından geliştirilen nitel araştırmaların kalitesi hakkındaki kontrol listesi aracılığıyla iki araştırmacı tarafından ayrı ayrı puanlanmış ve ortalamaları alınarak, kalite ve inandırıcılık standartlarının üzerindeki çalışmalar belirlenmiştir ($n=16$). Hem kritik veriyi sağlayacak hem de analizleri güçleştirmeyecek sayıda örnekleme ulaşmak üzere (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010), çalışmaların detayları tartışılmış ve yedi ülkeye ait (Türkiye, Japonya, Kolombiya, Güney Kore, Çin, Vietnam ve Bangladeş) 10 çalışmayla meta-senteze başlanmıştır. Çalışmada veri doyumu sağlandığı için yeni bir çalışma eklenmemiştir. Son adımda veriler üç aşamada (Howell-Major & Savin-Baden, 2010) analiz edilmiştir. Öncelikle tüm çalışmaların tema, kod ve doğrudan alıntıları seçilerek bir Excel sayfasına yüklenmiştir. İkinci aşamada tümevarımcı ve bütünlendirici bir yaklaşımla, öğretim programı değişiminin uygulanmasını engelleyici ortak faktörler temalandırılmış, daha sonra bu temalar EST çerçevesinde kategorilendirilmiştir. Son olarak, önceki aşamada elde edilen sonuçların tekrarlı okumaları ve tartışmalarla senteze ait temalar belirlenmiştir.

Bulgular

Öğretim Programı Değişiminin Uygulanmasını Engelleyen Ortak Etkenler

Çalışmalardan elde edilen bulgular öğretim programı değişiminin engellenmesinde mikro, mezo ve makro düzeyde etkenler olduğunu göstermektedir. "Öğretmen nitelikleri" ve "öğretmenlerin program değişimine inançsızlıkları" mikro düzey faktörler olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmalar öğretmenlerin iletişimsel yaklaşımına yönelik yetersiz pedagojik bilgilerinden; deneyimsizliklerinden, anadilin İngilizce olmamasından ve geçmişteki farklı deneyimlerinden dolayı yeni programı sınıfta etkin bir şekilde uygulayamadıklarını göstermiştir. Mezo düzey faktörler ise "yetersiz destek" ve "yetersiz alt yapı" temaları altında toplanmıştır. Buna göre okul müdürü, meslektaş ve öğrenciler açısından destek eksikliğinden; okul düzeyinde değişimin sahiplenilmediğinden ve iletişimin yetersiz olduğundan; yetersiz, yerel bağlamda tasarlanmamış materyaller ve kalabalık sınıflardan kaynaklı uygulama problemleri ortaya çıkartılmıştır. "Politik hedeflerle uğraşma", "zorlayıcı öğretim programı", "merkezi sınav sistemi ve sunulan program arasındaki uyumsuzluklar" ile "yetersiz yönlendirme" makro düzeydeki temaları oluşturmaktadır. Öğretmenler, politik beklentiler ve belirsizlikten; öğretim programının yüklü ve merkezi olması ile yetersiz zamandan; öğretim programı ile merkezi sınav sisteminin

birbiriyle tutarsız olmasından; öğretmen eğitimcilerinin niteliklerinden ve yetersiz mesleki gelişim desteğinden dolayı yeni öğretim programını uygulayamamaktadır.

Öğretim Programı Değişimlerinin Etkili Bir Şekilde Benimsenmesine Yönelik Sentez

Birinci araştırma sorusuna yönelik bulgular, öğrenci öğrenmesinde etkin olan sistemler arasındaki zayıf etkileşime ve bundan kaynaklanan koordinasyon eksikliğine işaret etmektedir. Buna paralel olarak, öğretmenlerin öğretim programı değişimlerinin uzun vadede yararlılıklarına dair inançlarının da zayıf olduğu belirlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla etkileşimler güçlendirilirse sistemler arasındaki gerekli koordinasyon sağlanacak ve böylece uygulama için gerekli bağlam ve yapılar kurulacaktır. Çalışmaların büyük bir çoğunluğu öğretmenlerin öğretim programının faydasına başta inandıklarını ancak daha sonrasında programa tepki gösterdiklerini ve eski uygulamalarına döndüklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu durumda öncelikle öğretmenlerin öğretim programına yönelik anlayış ve etkileşimlerinin geliştirilmesi için değişimin öznelliğinin, öğretmen niteliklerinin ve geçmiş yaşam deneyimlerinin uygulamadaki etkisinin daha iyi anlaşılması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca çalışmalar öğretmenlerin uygulamalar için gerekli bağlam ve yapıları kurmak yerine, kötü bir şekilde oluşturulmuş bağlamlarla uğraştıklarını göstermektedir. Öğretim programının uzun vadede yararlılığını ortaya koyacak etkileşimlerin oluşması için; sürekli destek, hem yatay hem de dikey olarak çift taraflı iletişim ve öğretim programı mesajında netlik gerekmektedir.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Standart olmayan öğrenci ihtiyaçları (Darling-Hammond, 2005) ve öğrenme ortamları göz ardı edilerek, küresel bir anlayışı merkeze alan yabancı dil olarak İngilizce dersi öğretim programı reformları farklı ülke bağlamında gerçekleşmiş olsa da, benzer faktörlerden dolayı uygulanamamaktadır. Nitekim bu çalışmada, mikro düzeyden makro düzeye kadar bütün sistemlerin uygulamayı sürdüreceği iletişim ve eylem akışını sağlayamadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Oysa kolektif karar vermenin gerçekleştirilmesi için sistemler arasındaki eylem akışının sağlanması gerekmektedir (Johannisson, 1987). Diğer taraftan hiçbir okul ya da öğretmen yeni bir öğretim programını uygulayacak yeterliliklere sahip değildir; dolayısıyla dıştan bir destek sunulmalıdır (Hall & Hord, 2015). Ancak bu çalışmaya dâhil edilen bütün ülkelerde, öğretim programı değişimi makro düzeyde sunulmuş ve mikro düzeyde bir uygulamanın gerçekleşmesi beklenmiştir. Oysa öğretim programı reformları hem bireysel hem de kurumsal anlamda öğrenmeye yatırım yapıldığında başarıya ulaşmaktadır (Darling-Hammond, 2005). İlginçtir ki çalışmanın örneklemindeki ülkelerin çoğunluğu (Japonya hariç) gelişmekte olan Asya ülkelerindedir ve bu ülkelerde eski usul öğretmen eğitimlerinin sürdüğü birçok çalışmada ortaya çıkmakta (ör., Kaplan ve diğ., 2011; Westbrook ve diğ., 2013); materyal, kaynak ve öğretmen eğitimlerine ayrılan bütçelerin oldukça kısıtlı olması etkili bir değişimin gerçekleşmesini güçleştirmektedir (The World Bank, 2003).

Sonuç olarak, farklı ülkelerde gerçekleşmesine rağmen, öğretim programı değişimlerinin benzer faktörlerden dolayı uygulamada engellerle karşılaştığı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bu faktörler; mikro düzeyde öğretmen nitelikleri, mezo düzeyde destek ve alt-yapı eksikliği, makro düzeyde ise rehberlik eksikliği ve merkezi sınav politikaları ile program reformları arasındaki tutarsızlıklar olarak özetlenebilir. Ulaşılan sentez ise, öğrenci öğrenmesinde etken olan sistemler arasındaki etkileşimlerin zayıflığına ve bununla birlikte ortaya çıkan koordinasyon eksikliğine işaret etmektedir. Program değişimlerinin benimsenmesi için mikro düzeyden makroya kadar bütün

sistemlerin üzerine düşen görevleri yapması gerekmektedir. Örneğin, program tasarımlarında küresel yaklaşımların yanı sıra yerel ihtiyaçlar da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Öğretim programı değişikliği, ilişkili olduğu merkezi sınavlar, öğretmen eğitimi gibi diğer politikalar bağlamında ele alınmalı; böylece yeni programa yönelik açık ve net bir mesaj sunulmalı, ayrıca yeterli kaynak ve bütçe de ayrılmalıdır. Yapılacak yeni çalışmalarda, diğer disiplinlerde meta sentezler yapılabilir ve başarılı program değişikliği uygulamaları EST bağlamında çözümlenebilir.

